



HEPATITIS E VIRUS

Hepatitis E Information Specific for Tsunami Survivors

What is hepatitis E?

Hepatitis E is a liver disease caused by hepatitis E virus.

How do you get infected with hepatitis E virus?

The virus is spread by drinking water or eating food that has been contaminated with the virus. For this reason, the virus is more easily spread in areas where there are poor sanitary conditions.

What are the signs and symptoms of hepatitis E?

Not every one has signs or symptoms when infected with the virus. Older persons are more likely to have symptoms than children. If symptoms are present, they usually occur abruptly and might include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). Hepatitis E is more severe among pregnant women, especially in the last three months of pregnancy. The average incubation period for hepatitis E is 40 days (range: 15–60 days).

How do you know if you have hepatitis E?

Hepatitis E is usually diagnosed when other types of hepatitis are ruled out and the patient has a history of traveling to or living in a country where hepatitis E is common. Talk to a healthcare professional if you think you might have been exposed to hepatitis E virus.

How can you prevent hepatitis E?

Be sure to drink water from an approved drinking source and cook or thoroughly wash your food before eating. You should wash your hands often, especially after going to the bathroom, before you eat, and after you change a diaper.

There is no vaccine to prevent infection with hepatitis E virus. Immune globulin is of no benefit.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).